

A PLANTATION EXPERIMENT

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share. If now 250,000 new shares are offered at par, the investment becomes \$115,000,000 and the nominal capital \$125,000,000, representing an investment of \$92 per share. Here, in an over-capitalized system, the average investment per share is raised by \$2. On the other hand, if the investment had been \$125,000,000 and the capital stock \$100,000,000, the investment would have been \$125 per share; and, with the increase of 250,000 shares at par, the average would be reduced to \$120 per share.

While the privilege which is offered at or above par cannot, strictly speaking, be said to constitute stock-watering, it is, nevertheless, a very efficient method of concealing the real earnings of a railway system. In the first place the size of the returns from this source is not generally known. In the second place, since these privileges are usually offered at or above par, the fact is lost sight of that there is, in a sense, as shown above, an unnecessary increase in the claims upon the company to pay dividends. But since, as stated above, the tendency of this kind of privilege is towards the equalization of the investment in the system with its capitalization, this second consideration loses importance.

Thus, while the stock dividend will always be opposed as a method of stock-watering, the privileged subscription, so long as the privileges are not accorded at a figure below par, will be recognized as, on the whole, a legitimate method of increasing the capital stock and obtaining funds for the purposes of corporate expansion. This method is unquestionably legal; and, as long as the investment increases equally with the capitalization, there is not likely to be any serious opposition to its use.

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A PLANTATION EXPERIMENT.¹

IN a paper on "The Negro in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta," read at the fourteenth annual meeting of the American Economic Association,² I briefly touched upon the conduct of a plantation in which I was interested. Because of a certain degree of novelty attaching to some of the features which characterized the business relations between the plantation management and its negro labor, I felt justified in referring to these transactions as an "experiment." It is to a discussion of this experiment, six years after its inception, that the present paper is chiefly addressed.

An adequate supply of labor is the first essential in the business of raising cotton. To secure it constitutes the most serious problem confronting the plantation management. Not for forty years has the supply equalled the demand in the alluvial section of Mississippi. Here the negro still has almost a monopoly of the field of manual labor, though at last his supremacy has been threatened by the white man. So great is the annual competition among planters for negro labor that the latter is afforded opportunities for driving bargains superior to those possessed by any other class of agriculturists with which I have any acquaintance. There is absolutely no fixed basis among planters for making terms with labor, and in consequence contracts vary through a wide range of conditions. Any negro family, though it consist of only a man and his wife, and have not a dollar on earth, will be taken into partnership with the planter; for that is the real nature of the share contract. The planter will locate the family for the year in a comfortable house, on its proper allotment of as good land as can be found in America. He will fur-

¹ Dunleith Plantation is in Washington County, Mississippi, on the Southern Railway.

² Washington, D.C., December 27-30, 1901. *Papers and Proceedings*, pp. 235-278.

nish the land (which includes house, fuel, water, and garden free), seed to plant it, and team and implements with which to cultivate it. This is the planter's part, and against it the negro furnishes his labor, and agrees to make and gather the crop. The two divide whatever is raised, share and share alike. In addition the planter supplies the share-hand with food, clothing, tobacco, medicine, and medical attention. He does this from the day the family reaches the plantation until the day it decides to "move," or, rather, until the planter learns of such decision. He hazards his advances upon the sole security of the crop, and looks to the negro's share for his reimbursement.

In the paper to which I have referred I made this statement: "There is scarcely a planter in all this territory who would not gladly make substantial concessions for an assured tenantry. I do not mean for negroes who would stay with him always, and never take advantage of an opportunity for genuine betterment, but merely for such as would remain with him only so long as they were willing to work at all under the same conditions, and should receive honest and considerate treatment at his hands."¹ I would to-day, and with all possible emphasis, reiterate the assertion of three years ago.

It was to the desire and hope of building up some such "assured tenantry" that our experiment largely owed its inception. Its salient features were: uniformity of tenant system, all land being rented at a fixed cash rental; the sale of stock, implements, and wagons to tenants upon exceptionally favorable terms; the exercise of proper supervision over the crop; the use of a contract defining in detail the undertakings of each party; the handling and disposition of the gathered crop by the plantation management. Let there be no misunderstanding of the motives behind all this. There was nothing philanthropic about it. It was a business proposition, pure and simple, but certainly one with two sides to it. The plan was to select a number of negro families, offer them the best terms

¹ *Papers and Proceedings*, pp. 259, 260.

and most advantageous tenant relation, and so handle them and their affairs as to make them reach a condition approaching as nearly as possible that of independence. The hope was that, having accomplished this purpose, we would thereby also have in large measure solved the labor problem, having attached to the plantation by ties of self-interest a sufficient number of these independent renters to make us in turn measurably independent of the general labor situation. The problem before us was to place in the hands of these people the means of acquiring something for themselves, and then, in every instance of deficient individual initiative, by proper supervision make them acquire it.

The principal statistical features of the experiment during the five-year period which witnessed its beginning and its practical abandonment may be thus summarized.¹ We brought to the plantation, at the close of the season of 1898, 30 new families, and began the first year, 1899, with a total of 58. On 1,064 acres of cotton land we made but 459 bales of 500 pounds average, a family average of 7.9 bales. The average price received was 7.50 cents per pound; and the entire crop, cotton and seed, brought \$21,663.88, or a family average of \$373.51. Of the families on the place, 26, or 44.8 per cent., left at the end of the year. We moved in 27 families, and, with the 59 which the addition gave us, cultivated 1,048 acres of cotton in 1900. The crop was 817 bales, or 13.8 per family. It sold at an average price of 9.94 cents, and with its seed brought \$47,541.66. This was an average cash product value of \$805.79 per family.² The number of families who left the place at the close of the year was 13, or 22 per cent. of the total. We

¹The number of persons to the average family remains practically stationary at about 3.7. See *Papers and Proceedings*, p. 269.

²The "cash product" value must not be confused with the total crop value shown for this year in "The Negro in the Delta," nor the total acreage given there with the cotton acreage shown above. It may be explained that the number of families given in the previous paper, 61, included 2 occupying somewhat anomalous tenant relations, who have been omitted here. The number of bales given here—817—is correct, instead of 818, as shown in the other paper. *Papers and Proceedings*, p. 269.

secured 15 new ones, and had on the place 61 families in 1901. We had this year in cotton 1,348 acres, and raised 1,270 bales, 20.8 to the family. At an average price of 7.90 cents for the cotton this crop, including seed, realized \$60,742.04, being \$995.77 per family. We lost 16 families this year, 26.2 per cent. of the whole force, and moved in 24 new squads, which gave us 69 for 1902. The latter year we raised 1,131 bales of cotton on 1,341 acres. Seed and cotton brought \$54,593.26, the average price for the latter being 8.08 cents per pound. The average product of cotton was 16.4 bales per family, the average value of cotton and seed \$791.20. At the end of the year we lost 17 families, 24.6 per cent. of the total, and moved in 23 for the following year. This gave us 75 squads for 1903. We cultivated 1,392 acres of cotton, and raised 741 bales, 9.8 to the family. This brought 11.77 cents per pound, the cotton and seed selling for \$53,527.73, or an average of \$713.70 per family. At the close of the season 31 families, 41.3 per cent. of our working force, left the plantation.¹

During the period under review the tenant system of the plantation was changed from an exclusively rent basis to just as nearly an exclusively share basis as it was possible to reduce it. In the first two years the entire plantation was in the hands of renters, while of the cotton acreage in 1903 they worked but 54.6 per cent., and produced but 45.3 per cent. of the crop. This has been still further reduced, and of a total cultivated acreage of 1,577 in 1904 they worked but 465 acres, or less than 30 per cent. The number of families on the place increased from 58 to 75 during this period; the number renting fell from 58 to 36, a decline in per cent. of the total number from 100 to 48. Here, again, the renters lost still further in 1904, falling to 30 families out of 79,—a decline to less than 38 per cent. of the total. In 1899 they held 73 head of work stock, 94.8 per cent. of the total number on the place. This fell

¹ The above figures and others of more or less interest in connection with this discussion are given in a table appended to this article. For aid in compiling the data I wish to acknowledge my great indebtedness to my business associate, Mr. Julian H. Fort.

to 60 head in 1903, which was but 47.6 per cent. of the total. Here, too, there has been another decline, the 60 in 1903 having fallen to but 23 in 1904.

But the story of the decline of the renter on Dunleith Plantation—of the failure to accomplish what was at least hoped for under the system inaugurated in 1899—cannot be told in any statistical display, nor can the reasons which compelled the abandonment of the experiment be set forth in a column of figures. Back of the inception of the scheme was the desire to create a satisfied and satisfactory force of reasonably permanent tenants. Not that we were ever sanguine enough to hope to have them all in this category. We would have been satisfied with a group of 50 per cent. of the total, or even with less. It was hoped to accomplish our object by a direct appeal to self-interest. We demonstrated our ability to make independent, property-owning families out of poverty-stricken material. These families in turn demonstrated the fact of their independence by severing relations with us almost as promptly as we put them on their feet. After the termination of three years we had begun to feel reasonably certain that even the most practical appeal we could make to radically improved material welfare would be generally overcome by an apparently instinctive desire to "move." After the experience of five years we were quite satisfied of our entire incapacity to make the average plantation negro realize the remotest causal relation between stability and prosperity.

We were not surprised to have 26 families leave us the first year, nor were we especially concerned over the departure of 13 the second. It was not alone the number who left us each year, but likewise the increasing annual drain on the property involved in their departure that forced us to realize the utter impossibility as a business proposition of continuing our general system. In operating a plantation, stock and implements rank with labor as necessary complements. A cardinal feature of our plan involved the placing of the first two essentials in the hands of the latter. If the labor could be depended upon to remain on the

property under normal conditions a reasonable average length of time, this result would, of course, have been merely incidental to a successful conclusion of the experiment. If, however, the laborers proved conclusively that they could not be so depended upon, then to have continued to put the business at their mercy by giving them control over everything necessary to its conduct would have been extending a foolhardy invitation to ultimate disaster. It is bad enough to have to face a general exodus of labor, but such a contingency becomes doubly serious when it involves the loss of stock and implements as well. There are on the plantation to-day but two head of work stock that were there in 1899. What has transpired gradually, and without serious consequences, might easily have occurred in a single year with disastrous results, had we allowed the acquisition of stock by the labor to proceed far enough. I wish it understood that not the slightest obstacle is placed in the way of a tenant's acquiring implements and stock, but also that we no longer sell him these things on long time, nor do we otherwise personally encourage their purchase. We simply endeavor to fill the place of each departing renter with a sharehand, and try to confine such renting as we are compelled to do to such as come to us with stock of their own. In short, we are no longer engaged in the altruistic enterprise of converting shiftless and empty-handed negroes into desirable and well-equipped tenants for the temporary benefit of other planters.

From 1899 to 1903, leaving out of consideration the 30 new families brought in at the beginning of the former year, we moved in 124 families. In the same period we lost 103. Of the 79 families on the place in 1904 but 8 were with us in 1899. Of the 103 who have left, some with little, some with much, not one has become an owner of land. Most have simply continued as tenants elsewhere. Many have lost what they carried away, and have become sharehands on other plantations. Some have dropped into the ranks of day laborers. A few have drifted into towns.

Let me illustrate one of these removals. In December, 1900, we moved in a crew of 7 people. They all represented themselves as working hands, though one of the men was over sixty-five, with a wife past sixty. Their entire outfit consisted of a horse, worth at a liberal valuation \$50, and \$58 worth of miscellaneous and indescribable household effects. In December, 1903, while riding over the place one day, my attention was arrested by a procession slowly approaching me. It consisted partly of two wagons, one buggy, two mules, one horse, three cows, two calves, and five dogs,—the property of this same crew of seven. In addition they had with them outside wagons enough to assist them in hauling away 285 bushels of corn, \$190 worth of household effects (including a sewing-machine for each woman and a gun for each man), and a half-dozen crates of hogs and several of poultry. During the three years they had paid rent and accounts amounting to \$4,168.96, had received in cash \$747.85, and had cash paid for help in their crops to the amount of \$393.90. Their accounts, of course, included a variety of purchases in addition to their living expenses. They carried away \$1,100 worth of personal property. They left to get rid of the supervision incident to plantation management, and removed a short distance to the property of a non-resident, and secured their advances from a merchant. In November last I learned that the head of the squad had applied to a neighboring planter for a location for 1905, and wanted the latter to lift a debt of \$1,000 for him.¹

Of those who have left I have said that it was not so much their number as their condition that concerned us. In this connection let us look into the condition of the thirty-one families who left us at the close of 1903. It may suggest itself to some that the single illustration just given cannot be typical of the possible consequences of the removal of a large number of renters at one time, but that it is

¹ Since the above was put in print this squad has returned to us, to make a crop the present year. It surrendered all it had, save household effects, to its merchant, and in addition we advanced \$75 to cover a balance. It begins where it started before, with nothing, and this time will work on shares.

an isolated instance, selected to prove a case. A study of the entire group of families who left that same year will also serve as a reply. Thirteen of these families were renters, and carried with them the following personal property:—

25 head of stock	\$3,125.00
9 wagons	360.00
8 cows and calves	200.00
Implements	325.00
Household effects	650.00
1,400 bushels of corn	700.00
	<hr/>
	\$5,360.00

They also had between \$800 and \$900 in cash; but, as this is an estimate it is not included. One of these families had rented 23 acres of land, and had been paid a cash balance of \$659.60. Another rented 25 acres, and drew a cash balance of \$734.72. Of the 31 families 18 were sharehands, and had but \$360 worth of property, and that in the shape of household effects. It is not difficult to see why the removal of the 13 renters was a more serious matter than the loss of the 18 sharehands.

We hear a great deal about the unequal distribution of wealth in this country, but I have always believed the wealth of the American negro to be more unequally shared than that of any other class of our population. Of course, these figures are too insignificant to be worth anything whatever in this connection, nor is this paper concerned with such a discussion. The remark is suggested, however, by a glance at the average holdings of these two groups of families. If we stop with the statement that 31 families owned \$5,720 worth of property, we have the very fair showing of \$184.51 per family. The actual distribution of their total holdings, however, gives the renters \$412.30 per family, and the sharehands but \$20. This inequality holds also with the 79 families on the plantation in 1904. They own, all told, \$7,180 worth of property. This would be \$90.88 per family. An analysis, however, shows that

30 renters own \$177.33 per family, or \$5,320 of the total. (This is within \$40 of the exact amount taken away by the 13 renters in 1903.) Of the balance, \$1,120 is held by 12 sharehands, an average per family of \$93.33. The remaining \$740 is made up of a distribution of \$20 each to 37 sharehands, solely for household effects. But a further analysis shows a still more striking inequality. The 8 families who have been with us since 1899 constitute but little more than 10 per cent. of the total in 1904, but own more than 60 per cent. of the total property. They own \$4,375 worth, or \$546.87 per family.

While there is no question in my mind as to the cash rent tenancy being preferable, from the laborer's standpoint, to any form of *métayer*, yet I must not be understood as holding that all the advantages by any means accrue to the side of the former system. Earlier in this discussion I gave an entirely unexaggerated statement of what the planter will do in the way of "staking" the sharehand who comes to him with a capital consisting only of ability to work. Thanks to a crop lien law and a fertile soil, such a man can secure advances in my section of the country upon the sole security of the crop to be grown by him. He has the advantage over the renter of having the planter for a partner, and the latter takes all the risk. If disaster overtake him, the renter may lose his stock and implements, but the sharehand operates on another's capital. At worst he can lose but his labor, and for this he has in any possible contingency at least been sheltered, clothed, and fed. After all, the net results to the tenant depend far more upon his individual efforts and upon his habits, whether of extravagance or economy, than upon any fixed features incident to one system of tenure or the other. Upon every plantation are to be found sharehands who make just as much as do any of the renters, and the nature of whose tenant relation is entirely of their own choosing. A number of accounts could be adduced to illustrate the relative results of the two systems, but the personal equation is so large a factor as to impair the value of bare figures

for purposes of comparison. The two following are selected because they are accounts of families equal in all essential respects. They are for 1903, and are condensed as much as possible.

RENTER: 18½ ACRES (15½ IN COTTON, 3 IN CORN).

Debits.

Rent	\$129.50
Merchandise	96.75
Stock feed	52.65
Blacksmith, doctor, and planting seed	25.58
Work in crop, picking and ginning	42.60
Cash	162.48
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	\$509.56

Credits.

Net proceeds of 8 bales of cotton, 4,543 pounds, and seed from same	\$509.56
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SHAREHAND: 18 ACRES (16 IN COTTON, 2 IN CORN).

Debits.

Merchandise	\$91.85
Work in crop, picking and ginning	40.00
Cash	196.40
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	\$328.25

Credits.

One-half net proceeds of 10 bales of cotton, 5,327 pounds, and seed from same	\$328.25
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The renter made 75 bushels of corn, and the sharehand's half of his was 25 bushels. The sharehand made 333 pounds of lint cotton per acre, the renter 293 pounds. The latter was 27 pounds above the plantation average for the year, and 73 pounds above the average yield of renters. The sharehand's yield was 67 pounds above the average of the plantation and 15 pounds below the average sharehand's. The renter had three items on his account which the planter has to provide under a share contract,—namely, blacksmith, stock feed, and planting seed. The sharehand happened to have no doctor's bill. The renter drew \$4.90 more in merchandise than the sharehand, but received \$33.92 less cash. The renter owned two mules, a wagon,

and implements, which may be said to have represented his operating capital. He also owned a buggy. The share-hand operated with plantation stock and implements, but owned a riding horse and a cow.

In immediate bearing upon our experiment and as illustrating the gradual transition from a rent to a share system, the most significant figures in the appended table are those which show the stock owned by renters, those showing the rented acreage, and those giving the number of families renting, with per cent. of total number. There are other figures, however, of more or less interest in any general discussion of plantation economy. Take the acreage production of lint cotton, for example. The figures show a range of from 215 pounds to 471, and illustrate the fluctuations that may result from various combinations of yield and price. Their study will exhibit the ups and downs of the business,—its possibilities and its hazards. The most valuable lesson they offer is the heavy advantage shown to follow a large yield per acre.¹ In the figures showing the amount of cash advanced tenants each year on the two accounts of outside work in making their crops and in extra picking, we are dealing with two of the most important factors in the net results of the negro's crop. These two items are shown to have been \$4.52 for each bale raised in 1902. Even if equally distributed, this would have imposed an average charge that year of \$74.17 per family. But the amount of such assistance needed or demanded by the negro varies all the way from nothing up to enough to consume what would otherwise be handsome profits. These two items alone during this five-year period would have increased the cash balances to our tenants in the total sum of \$15,248.90.

¹ The fluctuations of yield exhibited here were under conditions well-nigh absolutely uniform during the five years,—save in the one respect of weather. Cotton is essentially a "weather crop," and this truism points to the fallacy of most of the deductions and speculations founded upon the indicated yield of 1904. The most assured conclusion as to labor and other conditions, and the most solemnly announced prediction for ensuing years, may both be rendered absurd by too much, or too little, rain during the growing season, by too much while the crop is being saved, or by a killing frost too late in the spring, or one too early in the fall.

The transactions between the planter and tenant are frequently utterly devoid of any approach to a proper business basis. This is largely on account of the character of the labor, and rests partly on established custom and partly on the competition for hands. At all events, out of the combination of causes the negro manages to realize in much too large measure for his own good the gratification of his whims and pleasures. I have yet to know of one so deeply in debt or so far behind with his crop as to cause the least hesitation in the matter of demands for cash for the circus or excursion. But of all plantation customs the most pernicious, in my judgment, is that of advancing "Christmas money." This is just exactly what its designation implies. It is never asked for under any pretext of being devoted to some legitimate or substantial use. It is drawn for the sole and express purpose of promoting the pleasures of the holiday season, which begins, according to the recognized plantation calendar, several days before the 25th of December, and terminates several days after the 1st of January. I have never heard of a dollar of such money being diverted from its destined aim. It is spent in various and sundry ways, according to the individual estimate of what constitutes "a good time." A good part goes for railroad fare,—for "riding the train"; the saloon and the crap table receive more than their share; some goes for cheap finery and pinchbeck jewelry. We tried the experiment of putting this matter on a business basis in 1899. In consequence there was no "Christmas money," but we have put out our share since. The figures show the aggregate amount on this account to have been \$3,034.70. This may seem small, but it should be considered in conjunction with the accompanying figures, showing the cash balances and advances during this same month each year. They show that in December during the five years there was advanced a total of \$7,990.63 in addition to Christmas money. The items are placed in juxtaposition, so that the significance of the latter annual draft and waste may be the more readily appreciated. To illustrate further the

amount of cash handled by the negroes, the table also shows the cash balances and advances to them during the ginning season. This usually begins in September, and runs to January, February, or March, according to conditions. During these months there was paid our negroes, exclusive of advances while the crop was being grown, cash to the amount of \$44,727.05, an average of \$8,945.41 each year.

In concluding my earlier paper, to which in some sense this may be considered a second and final chapter, I said that it was impossible for me to judge fairly the effect upon our negro labor of the showing at that time exhibited. I may quote this statement: "To arrive at a just conclusion on this point, at least five years would be required, and only such tenants as removed to other places to continue the tenant relation could be considered in enumerating the removals. It would be manifestly unfair, in considering the extent and influence of a migratory, restless habit, to attribute to it such as were actuated by opportunity and desire to purchase land."¹

We have before us an exhibit of the transactions of a somewhat longer period than the one suggested. As far as possible, it is confined to a bare statement of fact. It is entirely competent for any one interested in the subject to study the data presented and reason to his own conclusions. In judging how far it might be safe to generalize from a single plantation, the following suggestions may with some possible profit be borne in mind. The operations cover a period practically of six years, though all the crop data for the last year are not available. The number of families covered is 154, and of individuals affected more than 1,600. The negroes composing these families came from nearly every section of the South, every Southern State contributing, with the exception of Texas and Florida. The operations extend through years characterized by extremes both of yield and price, with an excellent general average of each. The plantation management was strongly biased in favor of the rent system at the beginning of 1899:

¹ *Papers and Proceedings*, pp. 271, 272.

it leans as strongly towards the share system at the close of 1904. The relations between management and tenants have been uniformly kindly and necessarily most intimate. In the main the families have been of good class, orderly, and well behaved, but one homicide having occurred among them during the six years. No one of the 103 families that have removed has undertaken the purchase of land. The average age of the heads of families has been about forty years. Of the 8 who have remained on the place during six years, 4 are over sixty-five, 1 over sixty, 2 over and 1 under forty.

To my mind, the most suggestive fact which these operations would seem to establish is, stated conservatively, that the attainment of a prosperous condition by the plantation negro does not influence him sufficiently to create an attachment for the local environment which accomplishes his material betterment. This seems to me true, unless the removals from such environment are at least in some considerable measure influenced by stronger appeals to intelligent self-interest than are offered by the conditions surrounding the initial improvement. This, of course, presumes the persistence of normal and friendly relations between tenant and management. I take it that in the case before us we are justified in eliminating at the outset, as one legitimate occasion of removal, if I may use the expression, the desire to become a land-owner, inasmuch as no attempt was made in such direction. In running down the list of recorded causes of removal, I find one, and but one, that can be placed in the class of appeals to self-interest, and then only by not insisting that such self-interest be intelligent. This was the case of several well-to-do renters who left us in 1902 because they were offered a reduction of land rent of one dollar per acre elsewhere. Upon its face such action cannot be criticised. As a matter of fact, it emphasized the operation of an unfortunate racial trait,—the thoughtless failure to distinguish between the simplest forms of real and fictitious advantage, the heedless pursuit of the shadow for the substance. The property

to which these people removed was run down, its houses were scarcely habitable, its drainage was poor, and there was not another family on it at the time. The reduced rent was a concession to necessity, yet the bait was seized as eagerly as though the hook were not visible to the foresight even of a child. Within a few weeks, whether prompted by characteristic vacillation or by the operation of returning common sense, I do not undertake to say, some of these families wanted to return to us.

It would be well-nigh impossible to enumerate the various causes, real and imaginary, behind the change of abode of the hundred and odd families who left us during these years. In several instances, hands left because we were unwilling to advance the amount of "Christmas money" to which they felt themselves entitled. Some departed with the rare frankness of a declaration that they "just wanted a change." Family troubles, the separation of husbands and wives, also account for their share. Still others went because of alleged dissatisfaction with the contract under which they had successfully been brought to a state of independence.¹

In saying that I have long since abandoned the hope of fathoming the processes of the plantation negro's mind, I have "a conscience void of offence" toward these people, to whom I have never knowingly been guilty of an unjust act or word. I mean simply to give expression to the conviction, speaking of the average, of course, and not of the rare exception, that their actions have no logical or reasonable basis, that they are notional and whimsical, and that they are controlled far more by their fancies than by their common sense. Not that the negro is to be called upon to render to the world a reason for his every act,—to account to his critics for the motives behind his comings and his goings upon the earth. But the student of sociology and economics is interested to discover if it be true, as is

¹In selling stock, our contract had required the renter to plant enough corn to provide sufficient feed. After a number had paid for their mules, they objected to this because corn is not a cash crop. One of the changes incident to the abandonment of our experiment was the discontinuance of our comprehensive contract, and the substitution of one of a dozen lines in the simplest possible form and terms.

so generally stated, that a certain large and distinct class of the world's laboring population is characterized by a restless, migratory tendency. This interest attaches to the general subject, whether the concrete illustration be drawn from the fields of the Southern States, from the diamond mines of Kimberley, or from the gold workings of the Rand. The matters and results treated in this paper merely offer cumulative evidence to the correctness of a largely entertained conviction. It is not maintained that they are a demonstration. But the fact does stand out that, in the matter of building up a group of reasonably permanent tenants, these negroes signally failed to respond to the influence of the most favorable economic conditions with which it was possible for a plantation to surround them. This much is demonstrated, and I account for it in two ways: first, on the hypothesis of a migratory instinct; second, on that of a characteristic easy-going indolence, which seeks freedom to assert itself, and chafes under restraints which measurably restrict its enjoyment. The negro race, in the mass, is charged with numerous faults and weaknesses. It is no purpose of mine to discover new ones or to magnify the old. I but give utterance to a sincerely entertained opinion, based upon many years of close personal observation, when I say that these traits to-day present the greatest obstacle to the real, general, permanent advancement of the race, whether in this country, Africa, or the West Indies. I have read a great deal about the negro's "love of home," and have heard much of the strength of his "local attachment," but in a not unkindly search I have been able to discover neither the one nor the other among the masses of the race. To my mind they are a restless people. Ever seeking change, they sometimes wander far afield, and traverse the boundaries of States in its pursuit. Again, like one lost in a forest, they move but in a narrow circle, yet always in the same vain, aimless quest. They have been wanderers since emancipation gave free play to native instinct, and I do not see how a love of home, in the real sense, could characterize a people who in the mass know so little of such an abode. Certainly, the plantation negro changes

his residence far too often for his children to form local attachments or to develop anything akin to such a sentiment. I have often been impressed with the peculiar significance which long usage has attached to the very word "home" among these people. It has come to mean no more than "house," and the two are synonymous terms. When the plantation negro starts out in quest of an abiding place for another year, he goes in search of another "home."

On November 26 last the principal of Tuskegee Institute gave to the press a statement which has been very widely reproduced and commented upon. It recited "the main complaints of the colored people," given to him "time and time again," as explaining their preference for the "uncertain existence" of cities and towns to "comparative prosperity upon a farm." I give them in full: "Poor dwelling-houses, loss of earnings each year because of unscrupulous employers, high-priced provisions, poor school-houses, short school terms, poor school-teachers, bad treatment generally, lynchings and whitecapping, fear of the practice of peonage, a general lack of police protection, and want of encouragement."

There is no intimation here of any possible fault or failing on the negro's part. Whether or not the really effective causes behind the urban drift observed by Mr. Washington in Georgia are essentially different from those behind migrations from place to place in the Mississippi Delta, we need not stop to inquire. My only suggestion is that not one charge in this comprehensive catalogue was ever laid at our door, yet somehow the fact of local drift and restless movement still remains with us an ever-present reality. And what I say for ourselves I can say likewise for scores of others. I do not say that the complaints recited are not real in some counties of the South. I do assert, however, that they fail to cover the ground. When the friend of the negro masses would know the whole truth behind the forces which to-day most militate against the material progress of the race, he must go deep below the surface of troubles which the white man can remove or rectify.

DUNLEITH, MISS.

ALFRED HOLT STONE.

PLANTATION STATISTICS.

YEAR.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.
NUMBER OF FAMILIES.	58	59	61	69	75
Number families leaving and per cent. of total .	26 44.8%	13 22%	16 26.2%	17 24.6%	31 41.3%
Cotton acreage	1,064	1,048	1,348	1,341	1,392
Bales (500 lbs. average) .	459	817	1,270	1,131	741
Lint per acre	215	389 ¹	471	421	266
Bales per family	7.9	13.8	20.8	16.4	9.8
Average price, cents . .	7.50	9.94	7.90	8.08	11.77
Value of cotton and seed .	\$21,663.88	\$47,541.66	\$60,742.04	\$54,593.26	\$53,527.73
Value per acre	\$20.36	\$45.36	\$45.06	\$40.71	\$38.45
Value per family	\$373.51	\$805.79	\$995.77	\$791.20	\$713.70
Stock of renters and per cent. of total on place .	73 94.8%	76 85.3%	89 78.7%	77 64.7%	60 47.6%
Cash advanced for work in tenants' crops	\$465.40	\$513.90	\$856.90	\$741.40	\$161.80
Cash for picking	\$759.80	\$1,536.10	\$3,859.55	\$4,376.40	\$1,977.65
Cash for work and picking per bale	\$2.66	\$2.50	\$3.71	\$4.52	\$2.88
Work and picking per family	\$21.12	\$34.40	\$77.32	\$74.17	\$28.52
Christmas money	none	\$375.00	\$1,735.35	\$473.85	\$450.50
Additional cash advanced during December . .	\$641.59	\$2,378.58	\$1,871.00	\$1,163.95	\$1,935.51
Total cash balances and advances during gin- ning season	\$3,077.22	\$12,747.14	\$13,899.96	\$7,436.39	\$7,566.34
Average per family dur- ing ginning season . .	\$53.05	\$216.05	\$227.86	\$107.77	\$100.88
Number families renting and per cent. of total .	58 100%	59 100%	53 86.8%	45 65.2%	36 48%
Rented cotton acreage and per cent. of total .	1,064 100%	1,048 100%	1,200 89.02%	884 65.9%	761 54.6%

¹ In a former paper the yield for this year was stated to have been 450 pounds. An error was made in the cotton acreage used as the basis of the calculation. The above is the corrected figure. The former was an isolated statement, and did not affect the accuracy of any other figures given at the time.

THE INHERITANCE TAX IN THE AMERICAN COMMONWEALTHS.

IN the number of this *Journal* for August, 1904, Mr. Huebner published an article on the Inheritance Tax in the American Commonwealths.¹ At the time the article appeared the writer of this note was just completing a similar study. Mr. Huebner's work is so well done that little is left for another. However, it has seemed worth the while to supplement his published results at two points. A tabular statement of the inheritance tax legislation as it now stands will make it possible to ascertain all the important provisions of a given law without inconvenience, and a fuller examination of the financial significance of the tax may be desirable. This note is designed to supplement Mr. Huebner's excellent review of the development of the State inheritance taxes at these points.

In the accompanying tables, Ia and Ib, the classes of heirs, taxable property, exemptions and rates—these being the provisions of most importance—have been indicated. The object is not to summarize the development of the inheritance tax legislation, but to state the important provisions of the inheritance tax laws as they now stand.

To show these provisions conveniently, it has been necessary to divide the States into two groups. In the first group (Ia) the heirs are divided into two classes, known as "direct" and "collateral," and treated accordingly. In the second group (Ib) are five States which discriminate between three classes of heirs and apply rates to their shares graduated according to class. To these are added two States—North Carolina and Wisconsin—where the heirs are divided into five classes.

Inheritance taxes are now being collected in thirty of our commonwealths. In but one State—Alabama—has

¹"The Inheritance Tax in the American Commonwealths," by Solomon Huebner, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, August, 1904, pp. 529-550.

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